

THE PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND ST MARY MAGDALENE

35 Brighton Place, Edinburgh EH15 1LL

Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 3HY

Parish Priest:

Fr Jock Dalrymple:

0131 669 5447

Deacon:

Revd Eddie White:

07986 015772

Sacrament of Reconciliation: after the Vigil Mass (7.30pm on Saturday) or any time by appointment

Pastoral Team: Jennifer Morris and Chris Vinestock

Shared Parish House: 3 Sandford Gardens, Edinburgh, EH15 1LP

Parish Administrator: Enrico Fertini

(Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10.00am to 3.00pm & Friday 11.00am to 4.00pm)

Web address:

<https://www.stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes.com>

Joint Facebook page:

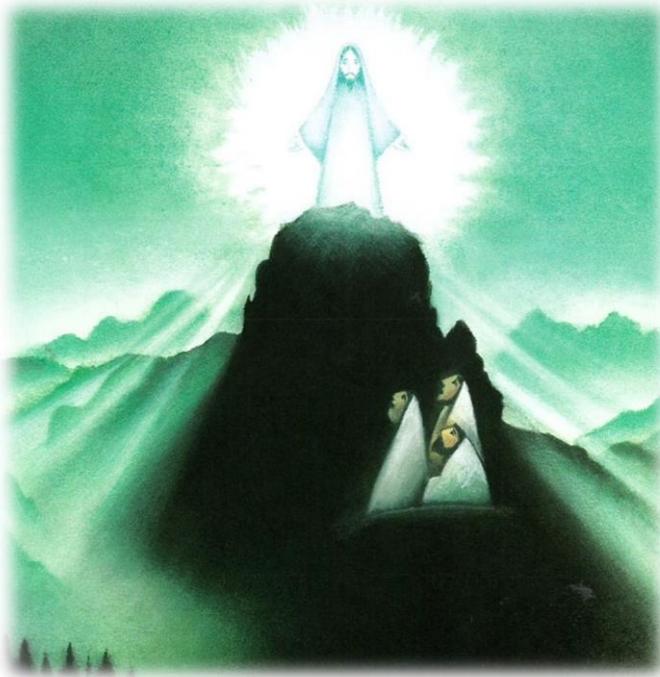
<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsandStMaryMagdalenes>

Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes:

stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com

6 AUGUST 2023

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD



Jesus took with him Peter, James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light...

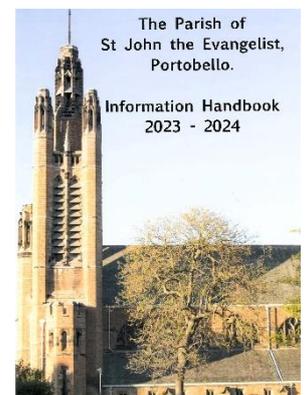
(Matthew 17:1-2)

*'God places us in the world as his fellow workers - **agents of transfiguration**. We work with God so that injustice is transfigured into justice, so there will be more compassion and caring, that there will be more laughter and joy, that there will be more togetherness in God's world.'*

(Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

On Monday, at 2.30pm at St John's, our Monthly Healing Mass - with the Sacrament of Anointing - will take place. All most welcome.

Hot off the press the (updated) St John the Evangelist Information Handbook 2023-2024 (replacing the 2017 edition) - please collect your free copy at Mass at the back of both churches this weekend – giving your name and address to those responsible for giving them out – we want to ensure that each household in the parish has a copy. Many thanks to all who have helped put it together, especially its co-ordinator, Frances McDevitt. *(It will also be available for anyone in St Mary Magdalene's who wishes to have a copy – we hope to produce a similar handbook for St Mary Magdalene's in the coming months).*



SCIAF – EMERGENCY ETHIOPA APPEAL - A reminder that if you would like to donate you can do so by visiting www.sciaf.org/ethiopia, by telephoning SCIAF: 0141 354 5555, or by making a donation via the Justice and Peace Group (contact 0771 9952472 or jimroarty4@gmail.com).

THIS WEEK



Saturday 5 August

9.30am-1.30pm – St John's Hall – **Pamoja Fashion Sale**

6.30pm – St John's – **Vigil Mass** - livestreamed

Sunday 6 August – FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

9.30am - St John's - **Mass** - livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene's – **Mass** – livestreamed

12.30pm – St John's – **Baptism of Matilda Rennie**

Monday 7 August

2.30pm – St John's – **Healing Mass (with the Sacrament of Anointing)** – livestreamed

7.00pm – Zoom – **Gospel Sharing** – please click [HERE](#) (or type <https://bit.ly/46cEPB4> into your browser)

Tuesday 8 August

10.00am – St John's – **Mass** – livestreamed

11.00am – St John's – **Baptism of Noemi Alba Abbasciano**

4.30pm – Parish House – **Pastoral Team Meeting**

Wednesday 9 August - 10.00am – St John's – **Mass** – livestreamed

Thursday 10 August - 10.00am – St Mary Magdalene's – **Mass** - livestreamed

Friday 11 August - 10.00am – St John's – **Mass** – livestreamed

Saturday 12 August - 6.30pm – St John's – **Vigil Mass** - livestreamed

Sunday 13 August

9.30am - St John's - **Mass** - livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene's – **Mass** – livestreamed

View the **links for the Masses** by visiting our webpage:

<http://bit.ly/2023Mass> - or by scanning the QR code → → → →



‘SAINT’ OF THE WEEK (1) – Blessed Franz Jägerstätter - Conscientious Objector, Martyr (20 May 1907- 9 August 1943)

"Neither prison nor chains nor sentence of death can rob a man of the Faith and his own free will. God gives so much strength that it is possible to bear any suffering, a strength far stronger than all the might of the world. The power of God cannot be overcome."

In the early hours of March 1, 1943, an Austrian peasant, Franz Jägerstätter, bade farewell to his wife and home and set off by foot for the neighbouring town. On a hill on the outskirts of St. Radegund, he turned one last time to take in the village of his birth, the parish church where he had served as sexton, and the fields where he had laboured as a farmer. Upon recognizing him, a neighbour called out in the customary greeting, "Go with God, Franz," to which Franz answered, "You'll see. no more of me."

The next day he turned himself in at the induction centre in Enns, where he had been ordered to report for military service. After stating his refusal to serve in Hitler's army, he was arrested and imprisoned. He was later tried before a military court in Berlin and sentenced to death. On August 9, 1943, he was beheaded as an "enemy of the state."

To the villagers of St. Radegund, Jägerstätter's death was a sad embarrassment. But no one was surprised by his stand. It was well known that Jägerstätter had undergone a profound conversion sometime after his marriage. Once known as something of a village ruffian, Jägerstätter had returned with zeal to the Catholic faith of his upbringing. Some felt he took his piety "a bit too far," but there was nothing of the "fanatic" about him. He was known as a man of honesty and high principle, devoted to his family and to the practice of his faith. In normal times these



characteristics would not have distinguished him from his neighbours, much less have hastened his death. But these were not normal times.

In 1938 Austria was invaded by Hitler and annexed into "Greater Germany." Most Austrians welcomed the Anschluss, which was subsequently ratified by a national plebiscite. Jägerstätter made no effort to disguise his disdain for the Nazis, and it was widely known that in the plebiscite he had cast the single "no" vote in the village. He likened that day to the original Maundy Thursday when the crowd chose the murderer Barabbas over Christ. He let it be known that whatever else might happen, he would never serve in Hitler's army.

The moment of decision came when he was served with his induction notice in 1943. Before taking his fateful stand Franz sought the counsel of his parish priest and even the local bishop. They joined his wife, family, and neighbours in trying to shake his dangerous resolution. Franz considered every argument, from the appeal to his responsibilities as a husband and the father of three daughters, to his

duties to the Fatherland and his obligation to leave political judgments to those in higher authority. But no one could persuade Franz to alter his conviction that any form of service in the army would involve recognition of the Nazi cause. This, he was convinced, would be a mortal sin.

In a remarkable document written in prison, Franz described a dream he had had in 1938 in which crowds of people were struggling to board a shiny new train. At some point he heard a voice announce, *"This train is bound for hell."* It occurred to him afterward that this train was a symbol for the Nazi movement. Surely, he concluded, one should not board such a train; surely, having discovered its destination, one ought to jump off such a train before it reached its goal, even though it might cost one's life.

While in prison Franz continued to hear appeals from the prison chaplain, his attorney, and even the military officers before whom he was tried, urging him to renounce his conscience and save his life. But Franz was convinced that he could not prolong his life at the price of his immortal soul. In this case, obedience to Christ must mean disobedience to the state. But he took comfort in the knowledge that *"not everything which this world considers a crime is a crime in the eyes of God. And I have hope that I need not fear the eternal Judge because of this crime."*

For years this story was little known beyond a small circle of Jägerstätter's family and fellow villagers. It was only in the 1960s, through the work of an American scholar, Gordon Zahn, that the extraordinary story of Franz Jägerstätter and his *"solitary witness"* was fully documented. Since then, he has been acclaimed by many in the church as one of the great saints and martyrs of our time. Nevertheless, support for his cause still encounters opposition from those who believe his beatification would reflect badly on all those of his countrymen who *"did their duty"* in time of war. Such attitudes, alive today, only underscore the remarkable courage of Jägerstätter's stand fifty years ago. Somehow, in contrast to virtually the entire church establishment of his country, he was able to discern how impossible it was to reconcile the evil nature of Nazism with the commandments of Christ. Nevertheless, his sacrifice, seemingly fruitless in his own time, presented an example, a beacon of conscience, that would illuminate the path of generations to come.

See: Gordon Zahn, *In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jägerstätter* (Springfield, Ill.: Templegate, 1964, 1991).

SAINT OF THE WEEK (2) –

August 11 - St. Clare - Foundress of the Poor Clares (1193-1253)

"Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!

Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance!

And transform your whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation!"

The story of St. Clare of Assisi is inevitably linked with St. Francis, the one she called her Father, Planter, and Helper in the Service of Christ. It was Francis who gave her a vision and enabled her to define a way of life apart from the options offered by her society. But her goal in life was not to be a reflection of Francis but to be, like him, a reflection of Christ. *"Christ is the way,"* she said, *"and Francis showed it to me."*

Like Francis Clare belonged to one of the wealthy families of Assisi. Like everyone else in the town, she was aware of the remarkable spectacle that Francis had made in abandoning his respectable family and assuming the poverty of a beggar. Doubtless there were those in Assisi who respected Francis as a faithful Christian, just as there were others who



believed he was a misguided fool. It was bad enough that a man of his background was tramping about the countryside, repairing abandoned churches with his bare hands and ministering to the poor and sick. But within a few years he had begun attracting some of the most distinguished young men of the town to follow him in his brotherhood.

What Clare's family thought of all this is not known. But we know what impact it had on Clare. She heard Francis deliver a series of Lenten sermons in 1212, when she was eighteen. She arranged in stealth to meet with Francis and asked his help that she too might live "*after the manner of the holy gospel.*" On the evening of Palm Sunday, while her family and all the town slept, she crept out a back door, slipped through the gates of Assisi and made her way through the dark fields and olive groves to a rendezvous with Francis and his brothers at the chapel of St. Mary of the Angels. Before the altar she put off her fine clothes and assumed a penitential habit, while Francis sheared off her long hair as a sign of her espousal to Christ.

It is tempting to read into this episode the romance of a spiritual elopement. To understand Clare, however, we must realize that it was not Francis whom she rushed to meet in the night. He provided the meeting place. But her assignation was with Christ. Yet after Clare had taken the plunge of rejecting her family and her social station, it was not clear what the next step should be. Apparently neither Clare nor Francis had considered that far ahead. Although she wished to identify with Francis's community, it was not seemly that she should live with the brothers. Francis arranged for her to spend the night in a nearby Benedictine convent. There her family and a company of angry suitors tracked her down some days later in Holy Week. When pleading proved fruitless, they laid hands on her and tried to drag her out by force. She finally stopped them short by tearing off her veil and revealing her shorn head. They were too late. She was already "*one of them.*"

Francis had long intended that a community of women, corresponding to his fraternity, should be established. In Clare he had found the partner he was seeking. She was easily persuaded to found a women's community, which was established at San Damiano. It required considerably more effort by Francis to persuade her to serve as abbess. Nevertheless, Clare quickly attracted other women. Over time these included a number of her personal relatives, including her sister Catherine and even her widowed mother. Within her lifetime additional communities were established elsewhere in Italy, France, and Germany. Unlike the Friars, the Poor Ladies as they were originally known, lived within an enclosure. But Clare shared Francis's passionate commitment to "Lady Poverty." For her this meant literal poverty and insecurity - not the luxurious "spiritual poverty" enjoyed by so many other convents, richly supported by gifts and endowments. To defend this "*privilege of poverty*" Clare waged a continuous struggle against solicitous prelates who tried to mitigate her austerity. This was the centrepiece of the rule she devised for her community. When the pope offered to absolve her from her rigorous vow of poverty, she answered, "*Absolve me from my sins, Holy Father, but not from my wish to follow Christ.*" Two days before her death, in 1253, she enjoyed the grace of receiving from Rome a copy of her rule embellished with the approving seal of Pope Innocent IV. A notation on the original document notes that Clare, in tearful joy, covered the parchment with kisses.

It has been said that of all the followers of Francis, Clare was the most faithful. Many stories reflect the loving bonds of friendship between them and the trust that Francis placed in her wisdom and counsel. According to one story, Francis put the question to Clare whether he should preach or devote himself to prayer. It was Clare who urged him to go into the world: "*God did not call you for yourself alone, but also for the salvation of others.*" During a period of dejection, Francis camped out in a hut outside the convent at San Damiano. It was there that he composed his exultant hymn to the universe, "**The Canticle of Brother Sun.**" Later, when Francis received the stigmata, Clare thoughtfully made him soft slippers to cover his wounded feet.

Finally, as Francis felt the approach of Sister Death, Clare too became seriously ill. She suffered terribly at the thought that they would not meet again in this life. Francis sent word that she should put aside all grief, for she *would* surely see him again before her death. And so, the promise was fulfilled, though not as she had wished. After Francis's death, the brothers carried his body to San Damiano for the Sisters' viewing. Francis's early biographer, Thomas of Celano, records that at the sight of his poor and lifeless body Clare was "*filled with grief and wept aloud.*"

Francis was canonized a mere two years later. Clare lived on for another twenty-seven years. In her own final "**Testament,**" written near the end of her life, Clare makes only a discreet reference to the pain of their separation and what it meant to her: "*We take note... of the frailty which we feared in ourselves after the death of our holy Father Francis. He who was our pillar of strength and, after God, our one consolation and support. Thus, time and again, we bound ourselves to our Lady, most Holy Poverty.*"

See: Francis and Clare: The Complete Works, trans. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.

NOTICEBOARD

PARISHIONERS PERFORMING IN THE FESTIVAL AND THE FRINGE...

Frances McDevitt, the St John's Organist, is singing with the Edinburgh Festival Chorus in their 2023 Festival Concerts (all in Usher Hall)

- **05 August (Opening Concert) - The Buddha Passion by Tan Dun (Scottish premiere), RSNO conducted by Tan Dun – tickets here: <https://bit.ly/44M5iEn>**
- 16 August - Szymanowski's Stabat Mater & Brahms' Ein deutsches Requiem, LSO conducted by Sir Simon Rattle – tickets here: <https://bit.ly/3rQJ1Ha>
- 20 August - Tippett's Child of our Time, RSNO conducted by Sir Andrew Davis – tickets: <https://bit.ly/3DSfhwP>
- 24 August - Beethoven 9, Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rafael Payare – tickets here: <https://bit.ly/3rNExAY>
- 27 August (Closing Concert) - Rachmaninoff's The Bells, BBC SSO conducted by Karina Cannelakis – tickets here: <https://bit.ly/3QzcCiL> More info: <https://www.eif.co.uk/whats-on/category/classical-music>

The Swells are back!!! *Roving Mad - Travel to Odd Places in Story & Song*

5 August and 7 to 12 August, 5.20pm, the Space Triplex Studio (Venue 38), Hill Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9DP

Jeremy Thorp writes: 'After the sell-out performance in St John's Church Hall in May, Jeremy, Malcolm and Nick are putting on their new show in the **Festival Fringe**.

The show is a Jazz Cabaret, a mix of stories from Malcolm's travels, some scary some funny. The tales are illustrated by songs chosen for the poetry of their lyrics, the melodies and rhythms, songs you might recognise from Sinatra, Tony Bennet, and Amy Winehouse. If you like travel and fun, story and song, this is the Fringe show for you. Come and join The Swells in their travels! Proceeds are to mental health Charities.

Malcolm Windsor (vocals), Jeremy Thorp (piano) and Nick Gent (guitar).'

Tickets: <https://bit.ly/Roving-Mad> or the Fringe box office 0131 226 0000 (£12 / £10)

Wee Seals and Selkies - As the school holidays enter the last 10 days ...

Scottish Story Telling Centre, 43-45 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR - Friday 4 to Sunday 13 August (not on Wednesday 9) – Saturdays/Sundays 19/20 – 26/27 August, 11am

Donald Scott writes: 'Wee Seals and Selkies, is a show for children (age 5+) and their families in the Scottish Story Telling Centre on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. A touching storytelling performance of friendship, magic and nature.

Based on books by award-winning storyteller, Janis Mackay, performed by the author and with fiddle music by myself, the show transports us to the far north of Scotland where we enter the world of seals and selkies. The show has enchanted both young children and their accompanying adults. Thank you.'

Full info scottishstorytellingcentre.com – tickets <https://bit.ly/474Lde2>

GARDEN OPEN FOR CHARITY - 39 Nantwich Drive, Edinburgh, EH7 6RA

This Saturday and Sunday, 5/6 August, 2pm to 5pm

Mike Burns, one of the Welcomers at Sunday Morning Mass in St John's, **writes:** 'We are opening up our garden to raise money for **The Henry Doubleday Research Association: Garden Organic and Scotland's Garden Scheme** – £5.00, children free. We will have light refreshments and plants for sale. We are waiting for you.'

Full info at scotlandsgardens.org.

Date		St John's Eucharistic Ministers rota		
August	5	Chris Vinestock	John Lawler	Pat Whyte
	6		Pat Robertson	Pauline Glancy
	12	Matt Gorrie	Rossana Velazco	Pauline MacInnes
	13		Pauline Connarty	Catherine Lacy

A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE 18th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – MATTHEW 14: 13-21 [*even though the Church is actually celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration!*]

(The author of this reflection is a friend of Fr Jock who lives in Northumberland)

I have been enjoying my BBC Drama of late. The recent dramatization of *Great Expectations* was superb as was last week's showing of *The Sixth Commandment*, the latter based on a true story. This week I also became hooked by BBC's 'Wolf'. It's a little on the gruesome side but quite compelling. It came as no surprise to me on Monday, to see one particular newspaper proudly announce that its readers were switching off in their millions as they found the storyline too complicated. Imagine a newspaper putting in print that its readers cannot follow dramatic nuance. Admittedly, there are three threads running through the story, which means that the same readers would not stand a chance if they tried to understand Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' or Dickens' 'Tale of Two Cities'. Fortunately, the Christian Gospel contains only one thread – Love God and your fellow humans with all your heart no matter what the cost.

If those readers found 'Wolf' a challenge, then they would not hang around to watch the film 'Meet Joe Black'. It's one of my favourite films but is not for the faint-hearted being over three hours long. 'Death' in the form of Brad Pitt is sent to advise the incredibly wealthy businessman William Parrish (played by Anthony Hopkins) that it was time to put his affairs in order. His life was drawing to a close. God has called him and his end is nigh. The viewer is taken on an interesting journey. There is love, betrayal, commitment and relationships all developing at a gentle pace with plenty of time for the viewer to reflect. When I first watched it in 1998, I thought how wonderful it would be if we all knew the date and time of our departure: "Final call for Flight 333. Please proceed to gate 7". We could put so much right in our lives; tell those we love that we love them. When we know the end-date, we can ensure that petty arguments and fallings-out can be corrected. Reality dictates that we rarely know the date – better, then, to avoid pettiness and huffiness. Life is smoother and easier this way.

Sunday gone; I was convinced that I was experiencing my own final call. Normally, when my heart leaves sinus rhythm and goes into fibrillation, I make frequent visits to the toilet. Since my thyroid issue, I have been in constant fibrillation. After my fifth visit to the toilet that night, I became aware that all was not well. I lay in stillness and the darkness of night overwhelmed me. I fully expected Joe Black to appear in the doorway. Every noise was heightened by my own state of alertness. I wasn't frightened – but I was anxious. I saw a shadow in the gloom. Was there someone there? I stared hard, and I couldn't see anything, when I stopped staring it seemed to be back. My mind was playing tricks - wasn't it? I suddenly became aware of my father who died 51 years ago. From nowhere came the memory of how as a 10-year-old I would accompany him to Stations of the Cross. It was a fifteen-minute walk to Church – uphill all the way. He would take my hand and, on cold evenings, would hold my hand inside his overcoat pocket where it would be warm. On those occasions, I felt safe and secure. Why such a vivid memory from 60 years ago? My anxiety dissolved and was replaced by that same security I had felt as a 10-year-old. Joe Black was on hold; my dad was sent instead. At this stage you might think me mad, 'off my trolley'. I remain absolutely convinced of my sanity. I have certainty. Slowly, the dawn crept in. Shadows were no more. I was witnessing a new day. My flight had not been called, after all. God still had plans for me. My mission is not yet over. I still have things to do, relationships to forge and repair, love to share. God had sent a messenger to re-assure me. I must get on with the task in hand.

In today's Gospel, Jesus spells it out quite clearly to his disciples. Give them something to eat yourselves. He anoints them with their mission. The disciples became messengers of God's love and beneficence. They are sent to feed the hungry. He has anointed you and I in the same way. We have a mission and an allotted time. Our flight has not yet been called. We have much more to do, love to share, hurts to heal, succour to bring. The flight is on hold. Rejoice in that fact and remember **nothing can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus.**

PARISH REGISTER

*Warm birthday greetings to Jennifer Morris, 70 on Friday 21 July
...and many congratulations to Anne and Jamal Jabir, who celebrate
their 40th wedding anniversary today, Sunday 6 August*

*Please pray for those who have died
recently:*

*Barry Thornton - Rory Ames -
Valentino Raviele - Lourdes Cheung*

*Please pray for those whose
anniversaries occur around this time:*

*Kathleen Defty - Susannah Bauld
Peter Wilson - Rob Moyes - Michael
Johnston - Lisa Malone - Tina Cupo -
William Gillespie - Christopher Laurie*

*Please pray for those
Parishioners who are sick:*

St. John's:

Lorraine Syme, Una Laing, Charlotte and Fred McGregor, young Sienna McDonald, Frank Phillips, Ann O'Brien, Kathie Gallagher, Diane McCarthy, Violet Paterson, Raymond Walker, Margaret Duffy, Mike and Patricia Lawler, Mike Burns, Harry Allan, May Thomson, Carol Simpson, Kenny O'Connor, Gerry Gallagher, John Cregan, Rose Thornton, Kathleen Brown, Mike Noonan, John Whyte, Maria Pacitti, Fiona Connel, Ann Dobie, Sheelagh Dobson, Chloe Sutherland, Norah Bruce, Ruth Vizor, Mary Grady, Pauli Walker, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, young Saoirse Golden, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Sarah McManus, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Mary Slight, Norman Telfer, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers and Marie Angela Crolla.

St Mary Magdalene's:

Monica Gorman, George Tait, Allan Guthrie, John McLaughlin, Mary McGovern (jnr), Carolynne McCann, Tom Bauld, Sam Burns, Jacqueline Marinello, Sandra Watt, Chris English, Andrew Farmer, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Bridget Malone, Charles Malcolm, Margaret Ryan, Jacqueline Hannan, Julie Keegan, Annie Watson, David O'Donnell, Jude Ferguson and Mary and James Muir.

Offertory 30 July 2023

St Mary Magdalene's, £353.50 total, including £207.50 Offertory and £146.00 Gift Aid.

St John's, £1257.90 total, including £349.50 Offertory, £167.40 Gift Aid and £741.00 online donations.

Anniversaries:

St John's:

Aug.5: Michael Johnston (2022); Lisa Malone (2017); Edward Heron (1997); Peter Wilson (1996); **Aug.6:** Tina Cupo (2018); Denis Ford (1993); Christopher McD Laurie (1955); **Aug.7:** Michele Gradone (2015); Adam Black (2014); Kathleen Innes (2002); Arthur Lonie; William Murray; Gerrardo Ranaldi; **Aug.8:** Mary Thornton (1969); Andrew McGovern; **Aug.9:** Mary Treasurer (2000); George Kirk (1987); **Aug.10:** Veronica Schmelter (1995); Elizabeth Garland (1994); Domenico Demarco; **Aug.11:** McMullan Family;

St Mary Magdalene's:

Aug. 6: Susannah Bauld (2021); **Aug.7:** Jim McKaill (2001); **Aug.10:** William Gillespie (2004); Michael A Atkin (2000); **Aug.11:** Amedeo Alonzi (2004); Barry Ledden (1968);

*Please pray for sick friends and
relatives of our Parishioners:*

Richard Plummer, Ann Morris, Alison St.Clair Ford, Shirley Robertson, Elaine Connolly, Miranda McDonnell, Mary Madden, Neil Boyle, John Wiggins, Lucy Pagett, Jim Gray, Angela McKenna, John Curran, Saramma Samuel, Margaret Troupe, John Wynn, Caitlin Mair, Robert Clark, Peter Robinson, Stuart Goddard, Win Veitch, Peter Hanley, Kate Titterington, Ann Currie, Sandy Ferguson, Chris White, Douglas Edington, Helen Robertson baby Josh Simpson, Desire Bascon, Janet Haring, Shona Killin, Tom Heaney, Mary Whyte, Mgr Gerry Hand, Tish Deacon, Elizabeth McGrath and Granny Elizabeth, Andrew Muldoon, John Havard, Mary Wallace, Ellen Green, Sophie Robinson, Louise Young, Tricia Scott, Harriet Wingfield Digby (aged 9), Alan Proudlock, Evelyn Walsh, Grace Stuart, Stephen Norwood, John Miller, Agnes Clarke, David Fenwick, Maurice McAllister, Rita Noonan, baby Lucas McCourt, Ellen Dow, members of the McGrath Family, Hans Zaunbrecher, Judith Franklin, Clare Johnston, Mary and Derek Lamarque, Keiran Smart (aged 16), Michael Doherty, Carol Turnbull, Jean Wylie, Angela Khan, George and Ann McDermott, Tara Kuppinger, Jessica Haggerty, Charlotte O'Brien, young Martha Moyes (aged 6), Jennifer Kay, Seval and Kazim Kazimoglu, Ann Watt (Mgr Rae's sister), Jan Meise, Mary Taygarth, Roger Bromley, Tony Rigg, Henrietta Fraser, Stuart Falconer, Elizabeth, Elizabeth and Gordon Marron, Katie McAnenny, John Kellagher, Ann Thorp, Dani Miniette, Peter Millar, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Michael Igoe, Clare Richardson, Laura Anderson, Richard Reid, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, James Shepherd, Andrew Franklin, Jamie Mitchell, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull and young Ray Donovan Syme.

THANK YOU!

COLIN DAVEY - A REFLECTION ON ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is one of the key words of faith. It's a prerequisite for forgiveness, the foundation of tolerance, and a route to peace. Yes/no questions are responded to with broadly yes/yes answers, either/or becomes both. It's also at the root of the perceived science-religion clash. I spent many years as a research scientist rifling through God's pockets to see what's in there and how it works, designing gloriously elaborate experiments that would yield definitive answers with precision and clarity. Things are not believed until investigated, proven, measured, quantified, peer-reviewed, published. More than that, it's almost as if the act of uncovering brings the thing itself into being: 'God does not exist until I can prove it'. But that doesn't really make sense when you think about it – the atom did not come into existence upon its discovery – and we should know better. Reason informed by faith, in the Catholic tradition, tells us so. Science is a tremendous asset to society but it won't tell you anything useful unless you ask the right questions. With an open mind, faith tells us useful things without even knowing what the questions are.

The RCIA was my chance to grasp the bigger picture, to move on from the pockets to the whole overcoat, to understand the very nature of God with due scientific rigour. In the end, when it came to scribbling down what I had actually learned, I realised that the single most important thing was that faith is much more about acceptance than about investigation, understanding or knowledge. With all one's worldly wisdom and experience as adults, we are (or aim to be) just like the small children who skip straight in with their simple acceptance. And it's something to hold on to too. Throughout our day-to-day lives in the Church we are presented with a multitude of explanations, interpretations and insights. It could be easy, in and among all these edifications, to lose sight of that fundamental simplicity. No strings, no supporting evidence, just the simple acceptance of faith in one's heart, our shared foundation.

Back before Katrin and I had kids and could still travel thoughtlessly, we were lucky enough to visit Valamo monastery in eastern Finland. Our tour guide was a 'seasonal' nun who could talk the hind legs off a donkey, overwhelming us with information, kindness, enthusiasm and interest. She showed us icons that performed miracles, among them the Mother of God of Konevitsa, which had been rescued from a sinking boat, another with gifts of thanks tucked into its cover that testified to its healing power. I accept what she said without question. I don't need to investigate how it works. It's not the icon itself that heals, instead the simple faith that allows one to believe that it does. Our nun assured us that everyone returns to Valamo, and in my own way I'm doing that now.

Acceptance also tells us not to judge each other, to respect others' views as different from our own. This is crucial to the success of any community that wishes to avoid polarisation and fracture, and instead aims to grow – one that can attract, and hold on to, the enriching diversity typical of an RCIA group. Ours is a broad Church and, in my experience as a new member, one that's open and accepting, whether one's outlook is traditional or progressive, whether we push for or against change, or don't want to push at all. As long as we're prepared for the fruitful discussion that follows, then the Church's embrace remains wide, right from its solid core to the noisy edges.

Colin, whose children Rouven and Mette serve on the altar at the 9.30am Mass, was part of last year's RCIA group, and was received into the Catholic Church in April at the 2023 Easter Vigil.

News From the Legion of Mary.

The July Coffee Morning raised £300 for Mary's Meals. The August Coffee Morning will be held on Monday 14 August after Mass in St John's Hall. Donations will be given to the Benedictine Nuns at Largs, who are desperate to have their roof fixed. They will be glad of any contributions we can make to help them to make the necessary repairs. Please come along and enjoy tea, coffee, home baking and friendly chat.

Some Mary's Meals news:

A boy and girl, who received Mary's Meals at school in Malawi, have won the gold medal in mixed doubles tennis at the Special Olympic World Games.

Haiti: Bringing hope in dangerous times. Mary's Meals has been serving meals in Haiti since 2006. Today 206,698 children receive meals in 662 schools in this Caribbean country.

Mary's Meals are making such a difference in the poorest countries. So, thank you to everyone who donated and gave so generously.